**CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST**

**FOR DRE COMPANIES**

**ARE INVESTMENT ACADEMIES 2024**

**“Project development and pitch deck writing”**

**Training and capacity building programme for local companies active in the decentralised renewable energy sector in Africa**

*English edition*

**19 March – 23 May 2024 (tbc)**

*(virtual and in-person)*

1. **Background**

As follow-on activity to the virtual ARE Investment Academy on “Improving Access to Finance for DRE SMEs” organised in 2021 and 2022, ARE is launching its **ARE Investment Academies 2024** on the topic of **“Project Development and Pitch Deck** **writing”.**

Up to 15 companies will be selected for the Investment Academy running from 19 March to 23 May 2024 through this EOI process.

The Alliance for Rural Electrification ([ARE](https://www.ruralelec.org/)) is an international business association that promotes a sustainable decentralised renewable energy (DRE) industry for the 21st century. ARE activates markets for affordable energy services and creates local jobs and inclusive economies in Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America.

Promoting and accelerating the development of sustainable, equitable and private-sector driven local DRE markets is one of ARE’s key objectives. To this end, ARE offers a range of activities to promote local entrepreneurship, specifically training and capacity building programmes for local micro-, small and medium-size companies (MSMEs) active in the DRE sector.

Access to finance is one of the key barriers for DRE companies, especially for early-stage, local businesses. To address this obstacle, ARE has developed a series of training and capacity building programmes on improving access to finance for local MSMEs.

The ARE Investment Academy is **supported by** [**GET.invest**](https://www.get-invest.eu/), a European programme that mobilises investment in renewable energy in developing countries, supporting project developers and companies towards investment readiness, and linking them with financiers. GET.invest is funded by the European Union, Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden and Austria.

Conceptualised as **hybrid programme of five (5) training modules** (three virtual, two in-person sessions), the Investment Academy offers in-depth, practice-oriented and interactive project development and pitch deck writing training.

**As the number of participants will be limited to 15 companies, selected companies will be expected to actively engage in the training in order to benefit the most from it.**

1. Objectives

The key objectives of the training programme comprise:

* Providing in-depth, practice-oriented and interactive **Project Development and Pitch Deck** **writing** **training** for **locally owned or -led early-stage MSMEs** active in the DRE sector, improving their capability to access financing for their businesses and projects and to develop bankable funding proposals.
* Providing an **overview of existing funding sources and financing facilities** and guidance on how to access existing funding sources.
* **Preparing high-potential and high-impact DRE MSMEs for their fundraising journey** and for further capacity building and business advisory offered by other organisations and programmes, notably the **GET.invest Finance Readiness Support**, or the **GET.invest Finance Catalyst**.
* The programme specifically aims to support **women-owned or -led businesses**, targeting 50% of participating companies being women-owned or -led.

1. Description of the training programme

Companies selected for the Investment Academy will receive intense training across 5 training modules on project development and access to finance-related topics. The training sessions will focus on practical skills development and be as interactive as possible. Theoretical training units will be complemented by a wide range of practical, interactive activities, including case studies, presentations by guest speakers (industry experts, representatives of financial institutions & funding programmes; peers from the DRE sector), practical exercises, and problem-solving exercises in small groups.

Guest speakers from different financial institutions and funding programmes will present their instruments, investment priorities, and expectations from an attractive funding proposal. Representatives from African DRE SMEs that have done successful fundraising will share their experience and lessons learned from the process.

Participants will further be asked to develop a detailed pitch deck for their company or investment project for presentation in a Pitching Session at the end of the programme. During that session, participants will have the opportunity to pitch their businesses and/or investment projects to a group of financiers who will provide feedback on each pitch and select the most attractive project. The winner of the Pitching Session will be presented in an Awards Ceremony.

Upon successful completion of the training, participants will receive a Training Certificate.

1. Indicative dates and training format

The training will take place during the period 19 March – 23 May 2024. Final dates of the individual training modules will be confirmed shortly.

The training programme will consist of 5 training modules, with a combination of virtual and in-person sessions: (i) the first three modules will be conducted virtually and last 4-5 hours each (including breaks); and (ii) the last two modules will be held in-person on the day before and on the third day of the ARE Energy Access Investment Forum (EAIF) 2024, expected to take place on 21 - 23 May 2024 in Lagos, Nigeria.

An English and a French edition of the training programme will be conducted in parallel. This Call for Expressions of Interest relates exclusively to the English edition.

1. Indicative training programme

The indicative training schedule is as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **Training Module** | **Date** | **Time** | **In-person/virtual** | |
| 1 | Business model development  Business plan development | Tue, 19 March 2024 | 14.00 – 18.00 EAT | | Virtual |
| 2 | Business plan development (cont.)  Financing plan & financial model | Tue, 2 April 2024 | 14.00 – 18.00 EAT | | Virtual |
| 3 | Pitch deck writing | Tue, 16 April 2024 | 14.00 – 18.00 EAT | | Virtual |
| 4 | Overview of funding sources  Financial model deep-dive  Pitch deck presentation exercise | Mon, 20 May 2024 | 9.30 – 17.00 WAT | | In-person, ARE EAIF, Lagos, Nigeria |
| 5 | Pitching session to financiers & Awards Ceremony  Matchmaking opportunities | Wed 22 May or  Thur, 23 May 2024 | 9.30 – 12.30 WAT | | In-person, ARE EAIF, Lagos, Nigeria |

The final and detailed training programme will be communicated closer to the event.

The training will be **conducted in English**.

1. Fees

Participation in the training programme is free of charge.

Participation in the training also includes one free ticket to the ARE Energy Access Investment Forum (EAIF) 2024 which will take place from 21 to 23 May 2024 in Lagos, Nigeria, which includes access to all conference and matchmaking sessions across the three days, as well as the networking reception on Day 1 and lunches across all three days of the event.

Moreover, participants may be eligible to a lump sum support of up to EUR 750 for travel and accommodation expenses incurred for the participation in the in-person training modules in Lagos, Nigeria (to be considered on a case-by-case basis). Participants are responsible for organising their own travels, accommodation, VISA, and logistics to attend EAIF 2024. Should travel expenses and related expenses exceed EUR 750, participants are expected to cover remaining costs through own funds.

1. Target companies

The training specifically targets the following companies:

* Locally owned or managed energy access companies from African countries which are providing DRE products and services to rural customers (households and/or businesses) and which are suffering from lack of access to finance;
* Early-stage companies with a clear strategic vision and with concrete funding needs (investment project, business expansion, etc);
* A specific focus will be on women-owned or -led businesses (target minimum 50% of participating companies) and on young entrepreneurs (below age of 30);
* Priority in the selection process will be given to companies that:
  + are serving last-mile clients and/or women customers,
  + offer productive use of renewable energy (PURE)/income generating energy solutions,
  + have high innovation potential (product/technology, business model, distribution system, financing solutions, digital solutions etc).

1. Eligibility & selection criteria

* Participants in the ARE Investment Academy will be selected on the basis of the information provided in their Expressions of Interest.
* **To qualify for participation**, your company must fulfil the following **eligibility criteria**:
  + duly registered in an African country,
  + majority-owned (minimum 51%) or -managed (51% of senior management) by locals (national citizenship),
  + at early stage of development with an annual turnover of less than US$ 500,000,
  + active in the energy access sector offering DRE products and services to rural customers (households and businesses),
  + eligible technologies: standalone energy systems (solar lanterns, solar home systems (SHS), etc); micro-/mini-grids; productive use of energy equipment and services; clean cooking (solar cook stoves, electric pressure cookers etc),
  + concrete funding needs (investment project, business expansion, etc),
  + willing to actively participate in the training, contribute to group exercises and discussions, dedicate time to exercises and homework, and available to participate in in-person training modules in Lagos, Nigeria, covering own travel and accommodation costs[[1]](#footnote-1).
* From among all eligible companies (fulfilling the above-mentioned eligibility criteria), **final participants will be selected based on the following criteria**:
  + Priority will be given to women-owned (minimum 51%) or -led (majority of senior management) companies,
  + Environmental & social impact (serving last-mile customers or specifically vulnerable populations; focus on women customers; PURE; job creation; GHG emission reductions; climate adaptation and resilience; etc),
  + Innovation potential (business model, product/technology, distribution system, financing solution, digital solutions, etc),
  + Replicable business model with high potential for scaling.
* **The number of participants will be limited to up to 15 companies**.

1. Submission of Expressions of Interest (EOI)

If you are interested in participating in the training programme, kindly complete and submit the below questionnaire, including the requested supporting documents, to ARE, attn. Mrs Gabriele Pammesberger ([g.pammesberger@ruralelec.org](mailto:g.pammesberger@ruralelec.org)), copying in Mr. Jens Jaeger ([j.jaeger@ruralelec.org](mailto:j.jaeger@ruralelec.org)).

The EOI (excluding the supporting documents) must not exceed 10 pages.

Submission deadline: 18h00 CET on Monday, 12 February 2024.

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

**ARE INVESTMENT ACADEMIES 2024**

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*English edition*

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|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **COMPANY INFORMATION** | | | | |
| **Company name** | |  | | |
| **Full address** | |  | | |
| **Website** | |  | | |
| **Legal status** | |  | | |
| **Company registration number** | |  | | |
| **Company VAT number** | |  | | |
| **Date of establishment** (*please provide certificate of incorporation*) | |  | | |
| **Annual turnover** (*in EUR*) | |  | | |
| **Total number of staff** (*of which # of women*) | |  | | |
| **Ownership structure of Company** (*please provide list of shareholders*) | |  | | |
| **Management team** (*please provide list of members of senior management*) | |  | | |
| **CONTACT INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANT** *(we highly encourage women staff to participate)* | | | | |
| **LEAD PARTICIPANT** | | | | |
| **First name** |  | | **Last name** |  |
| **Position** |  | | **Mobile phone** (WhatsApp) |  |
| **Email** |  | | | |
| **PARTICIPANT 2** *(optional; can only participate in virtual training sessions)* | | | | |
| **First name** |  | | **Last name** |  |
| **Position** |  | | **Mobile phone**  (WhatsApp) |  |
| **Email** |  | | | |
| **I’M SPECIALLY INTERESTED IN:** | | | | |
| ☐ Business model development  ☐ Business plan development  ☐ Financing plan and financial model  ☐ Pitch deck development  ☐ Overview of funding sources  ☐ Pitch deck presentation/Pitching session to financiers  ☐ Networking and “Matchmaking” with financiers | | | | |
| **ADDITIONAL TOPICS OF INTEREST, TRAINING NEEDS, ANY OTHER COMMENTS** | | | | |
|  | | | | |

1. **Business Information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Development stage of your Company** (*please select*) | ☐ Start-up (*pre-pilot phase or conducting first pilot projects*)  ☐ Early growth (*market testing completed, first sales*)  ☐ Growth stage (*stable increase in sales*)  ☐ Scale-up phase (*stable baseline sales, considering expansion*) |
| **Products/technology solutions** (*pico solar, solar home systems (SHS), micro-/mini-grids, productive use appliances/equipment, solar cooking, other*) |  |
| **Business model** (*distributor, energy service provider, EPC contractor, manufacturer, project developer, operator, other*) |  |
| **Which are your target groups** (*households, MSMEs, farmers, public institutions, other*) |  |
| **Do you provide consumer finance?** (*Yes/No; if yes, what type (PAYG, micro loans, other)*) |  |
| **# of products/systems sold; # of systems installed; total installed capacity (kW)** (*as applicable*) | 2020 –  2021 –  2022 –  2023 - |
| **Are you currently looking for financing? If yes, for which purpose?** *(e.g. business expansion/scaling up; a specific investment project, other; please specify)* |  |
| **In case you are currently looking for funding, which type of financing are you looking for?** | ☐ Grants  ☐ Equity  ☐ Debt funding (*loans, working capital, other*)  ☐ Other (*please specify*) |

1. **Description of your company**

|  |
| --- |
| **2.1 Description of your company** (*max. 2 pages*)  **Strategic vision**  **Your offer of energy products and services**  **Target customers**  **Business model**  **Track record and references** |
| **2.2 Organisation and management team** (*max. 1 page*)  **Composition and experience of management team**  **Organisational structure** (*please provide the organigramme*)  **Composition and experience of key staff** |
| **2.3 Innovation potential** (*products/technology; digital solutions; distribution system; business model; financing offer; etc.; please specify; max. half a page*) |
| **2.4 Funding needs** (*max. 2 page*)  **Description of investment project**  **Total costs of investment project and financing structure** (*please provide a preliminary financing plan and a basic financial model of the project as an attachment*)  **Funding needs** *(amount; type of financing/financial instrument)*  **Have you already contacted financiers/investors?** (*If yes, please specify which financiers; what was their feedback?*) |
| **2.5 What are the key obstacles you are facing when trying to access financing for your business/project?**   1. … 2. … 3. … 4. … 5. … |
| **2.6 What are your specific training needs with respect to accessing finance?**   1. … 2. … 3. … 4. … 5. … |
| **2.7 What is your main reason for participating in this training programme? What are your expectations?**   1. … 2. … 3. … 4. … 5. … |
| **2.8 Other comments** |

1. **Supporting documents to provide** (*as attachments*)
   * Certificate of incorporation and list of shareholders of your company
   * Organigramme and list of members of senior management
   * Financial statements 2022 (audited, if available), and preliminary financial statements 2023, if available
   * Basic financial forecast of the company for the next three years
   * Preliminary financing plan and basic financial model of the investment project you are fundraising for

**Thank you for your information!**

**Data protection**

Your data will be treated responsibly according to the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). For more details about the Alliance for Rural Electrification’s (ARE’s) GDPR policy, please visit our website at <https://www.ruralelec.org/privacy-policy>. Your data may be shared amongst the partners organising this training programme, mainly ARE and GET.invest to facilitate the development of the training content and the logistics of participation and share relevant announcements. You can request to delete your information at any time by emailing to ARE ([are@ruralelec.org](mailto:are@ruralelec.org)).

☐ ARE would like to add you to their database to keep you updated on future events, services and news via e-mail. To continue networking after the training programme, ARE would like to share your contact details on occasions where members look for contacts relevant for their business to develop potential projects. By ticking the box above, you agree that the following data will be processed by ARE for the purpose explained above: full name, phone, email, company, job position, country. You can obtain written communication of your data, as well as rectification, restriction of processing, and erasure, and where appropriate, portability of your data by emailing to ARE ([are@ruralelec.org](mailto:are@ruralelec.org)).

1. Travel costs of up to EUR 750 may be reimbursed by the programme. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)